Monologue

The following monologue is the Prologue from *Middletown*. The entire play is available on the Indiana Thespians website. You may choose to use the play to help you construct your performance.

Consider the following as you produce your monologue.

- You are limited to 3 minutes for your performance.
- You may start at the beginning and stop at 3 minutes, choose 3 minutes from the middle, choose the last 3 minutes or do your own cut of the monologue. Your choice will not affect your casting.

PUBLIC SPEAKER: Ladies and Gentlemen, Esteemed Colleagues, Members of the Board, Middletonians, Local Dignitaries, everyone really, stockbrokers, dockworkers, celebrities, nobodies, Ladies, Gentlemen, all comers, newcomers, the newly departed, the poorly depicted, people who are still teething, who are looking for a helping verb, the quote beautiful, the unquote unbeautiful, whose bones are just so, whose veins are just so, the drunk, the high, the blue, the down, *los pueblos, los animales*, foreigners, strangers, bookworms, those whose eyes are tired from trying to read something into everything, those at a crossroads, in a crisis, a quandary, a velvety chair, the dirty, the hungry, yes, we the cranky, the thirsty, the furious, the happy, who are filled with life, bloated with it, gorged on words, and of course the bereaved, the bereft, and let's not forget the local merchants, the smiling faces, the placeholders, us, all we people slowly graying, slowly leaving, who make all this all possible, this activity, this festivity, this hope, this dream dreamt with open eyes, friends of the deceased, the diseased, friends of the disowned, and of course also healthy friendly people with great skin and congenital heart defects, sports fans, sufferers of autism, down-and-outers, nonbelievers, animal lovers everywhere, real people people, with doubts, without certainty, with nothing else worth mentioning, the majority of us, silent, stifled, delinquent, in the background, barely hanging on, running out of time, hope, air, heart, nerves, chances, money, blood, friends, courage, faith, hair, time, teeth, time, time, health, hope, all of it, all of it, those *sans* everything, thos *avec* nothing, who can't stand it any longer, who never really could, gentle gentle people, infinitely injured people, lost souls, ghouls, ghosts, descendants, shades, shadows, future ancestors, Ladies, Gentlemen, I know I'm forgetting somebody, friends, likenesses, darknesses, citizens, people hopeful people, hopeful people, everybody, every last lone dying and inconsolably lonely person, fellow human beings, breathing people, breathers, breathers…welcome. The fire exit's over there. I think you can also get out this way.

Dialogue

Choose one of the following 3 scenes from *Middletown*. Please upload a video of you performing one side of the dialogue. You will need another person speaking the other lines. This person should be off camera. They do not need to be an actor. A flat intonation is acceptable for this person. You do not need to be memorized, but reading directly from the script is not suggested. The recording should show at least your upper torso and face.

The entire play is available on the Indiana Thespians website. You may choose to use the play to help you construct your performance.

Consider the following as you produce your scene.

- You may perform any of the scenes regardless of gender. Your personal preferences will be taken into consideration when casting.
- Film yourself acting and have another individual read the other characters(s) line off camera. You do not need to speak to the camera but you may if you wish to.
- **You are asked to do the same dialogue twice in two very different ways. There are no bad choices. Make strong choices.**

NOTE: Junior Thespians can only audition for the role of Sweetheart. This role can be male, female, or nonbinary based on the gender of the actor. The scenes for Sweetheart are not options for the audition process so please pick from the scenes below and follow the same instructions above.

Scene 1: Act 1, Scene 5

*(*MRS. SWANSON, *who has been standing off to the side, perhaps trying to remember John's name, perhaps checking her hair, etc., approaches* JOHN DODGE.*)*

MRS. SWANSON: John? We met at the library. You gave me your –

JOHN DODGE: I remember. Sure. Hi. *(still looking around)* I think I bought something and left it at the store. That wasn't a very smart investment.

MRS. SWANSON: I've done that – it's so stupid. Hey, are you hungry? *(She sits down on a bench.)* I have some little sandwiches. I'm really hungry.

JOHN DODGE: That'd be great. *(still thinking about whatever he lost)* Damn it. *(brief pause)* I'm sorry – I would love a sandwich. *(He sits.)* Thanks.

MRS. SWANSON: Was that a tour going on?

JOHN DODGE: I'm sure it was something.

MRS. SWANSON: Here. *(She hands him a sandwich.)*

JOHN DODGE: Wow. They are little.

MRS. SWANSON: I have more.

JOHN DODGE: No, they're great, thanks. *(brief pause)* God, I had the worst night. Almost non-stop meaningful silence. Worst morning, too. Don't get married, that's my advice.

MRS. SWANSON: I'm already married.

JOHN DODGE: Oh, that's right, I forgot. Well, I hope you brought a good book.

MRS. SWANSON: I didn't know you're…Are you married?

JOHN DODGE: I was. All I remember is lying in bed, listening to the breathing. That's not true. We had some pretty good times. Probably my best. Yeah.

MRS. SWANSON: I'm sorry.

JOHN DODGE: It's sad. You sit around reading the side of a cereal box. Half the dishes are gone, half the cups, you eat everything out of a dented can, no more pretty shoes by the door, and that's your little half-life. *(brief pause)* Definitely don't get divorced. I know, I'm all over the place on that one. *(brief pause)* Sorry. Are you getting settled here?

MRS. SWANSON: I am. We are. More and more. This is all a big change.

JOHN DODGE: What?

MRS. SWANSON: Here. And the whole idea of children.

JOHN DODGE: It is. I have two nieces.

MRS. SWANSON: Oh, how great – girls.

JOHN DODGE: They are great. You know what – it's just one niece, I think. The other one is her friend. I'm a terrible uncle. But, I don't know, I still feel like a nephew. Time, you know. "Buzzzzzzz." "Plink."

MRS. SWANSON: You said that the day we met.

JOHN DODGE: Something like that, I'm sure. It's a theory of mine.

MRS. SWANSON: It's not really a theory. You're just making different sounds with your mouth.

JOHN DODGE: So are you.

MRS. SWANSON: True. "True." *(brief pause)* How's gravity?

JOHN DODGE: It's all right, I guess. *(brief pause)* What?

MRS. SWANSON: You were reading a book about gravity.

JOHN DODGE: Oh, right. That's over. I just kind of lost the…you know. I mean, do I really need to know about that? Anyway, now, I'm taking this come on watercolor painting.

Scene 1: Act 1, Scene 1

(COP enters and stops at MECHANIC who is sitting on a bench, drinking out of a paper bag. MECHANIC eats something and throws the wrapper on the ground, as COP nears. MECHANIC hurriedly hides the paper bag upon seeing COP approach.)

MECHANIC: Evening.

COP: Maybe. *(referring to the bottle:)* I saw that. You think I'm a cop. I look like a cop, so, you figure, case closed: I'm a cop.

MECHANIC: You're not a cop?

COP: No, I'm a cop. You were right.

MECHANIC: Well, that's what I –

COP: *(interrupting)* That's what you thought. Everything is as everything seems, I guess. Good for everything. What about you?

MECHANIC: What do you mean?

COP: What about you?

MECHANIC: I don't know. I mean, who knows, you know?

COP: No. What are you doing here?

MECHANIC: I don't know, I was just walking around. Later tonight, I thought I might –

COP: *(interrupting)* Forget about before and after. I mean now.

MECHANIC: Well, I don't know, because I was –

COP: *(interrupting)* You don't know because you don't know. That's the trouble, the beauty, the trouble. So let's just leave it at that. *(motioning to the wrapper MECHANIC three on the ground)* I think you dropped something.

(MECHANIC picks up the wrapper.)

The problem with people like –

MECHANIC: *(interrupting)* I was just sitting here, minding my –

COP: *(interrupting)* Don't interrupt.

(Long pause, as MECHANIC waits and does not interrupt.)

MECHANIC: Was there something else you were –

COP: *(interrupting)* I thought I said, don't interrupt. You what, I should just…*(Long pause. To audience:)* Welcome. Hi, hello. Welcome to the little town of Middletown. Ordinary place, ordinary time. But aren't they all? No. They are not, all. *(to MECHANIC)* Say something nice.

MECHANIC: *(to both the audience and the COP, with some unease)* I'm just sitting here. I don't know what else. Um… *(He tries to think of something else.)*

Scene 1: Act 2, Scene 13

(JOHN DODGE's hospital room. Lights up on the body of JOHN DODGE, under a sheet. ATTENDANT 1 and ATTENDANT 2 are taking care of the room, unplugging equipment, etc. Lights will remain up on the body throughout the rest of the play.)

ATTENDANT 1: The coroner is on his way.

ATTENDANT 2: Dr. Elliman? He's nice.

ATTENDANT 1: His son goes to school with my daughter.

ATTENDANT 2: *(referring to a file that's hanging at the foot of the bed:)* Does this stay with the patient?

ATTENDANT 1: Yeah.

ATTENDANT 2: It's so quiet.

ATTENDANT 1: I think bodies soak up sound. Listen. *(to JOHN DODGE's body:)* We are in a room. You are a body. *(again, to JOHN DODGE's body:)* This is the sound of my voice. This is the language I use. You are far away. Where are you? What are you feeling? *(Brief pause. To ATTENDANT 2:)* It sounds strange, doesn't it?

ATTENDANT 2: I guess. It's weird. Did you talk to him, before?

ATTENDANT 1: A little. He was worried about a library book. He was sad but he tried to be good-natured.

ATTENDANT 2: I came in once to change something and he said, “If I had flowers, I’d give them to you.”

ATTENDANT 1: That’s sweet.

(one last bit of business)

I think that does it.

(checks a schedule)

Now I think we have to go up to five.

(They exit. ATTENDANT 2 lingers by the door.)

ATTENDANT 2: *(to JOHN DODGE’s body:)* Goodbye, person. That was nice about the flowers. I hope you’re not sad.